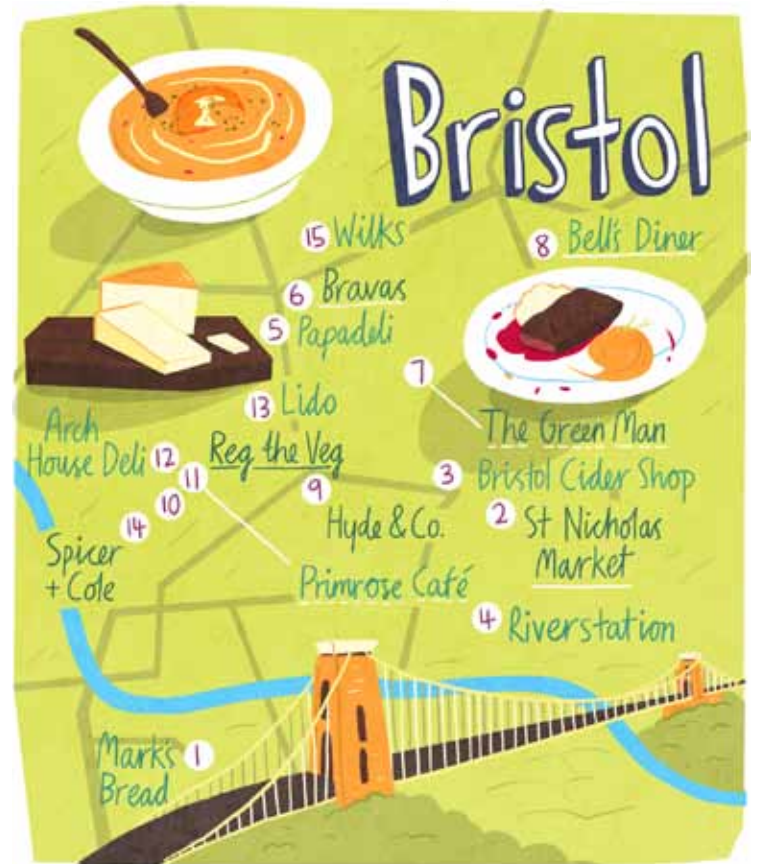


WEEKENDER

15 reasons to visit
Bristol

Everything from Michelin-starred dining to market shacks serving pulled pork sandwiches, and a restaurant where you swim before you eat

Words CLARE HARGREAVES Map PATRICK O'LEARY

TRUST
olive

Clare Hargreaves is a Bristol-based food writer who's been eating her way around the city for 15 years. She also organises Feast with a Chef; dinners cooked by top-drawer chefs around Bristol and Bath.

Clockwise from top left: Pieminister pies at St Nicholas' market; Primrose Café; Lido's roast scallops

1 You can spot the queues long before you reach **Mark Newman's artisan bakery** (291 North St, marksbread.co.uk) on the increasingly popular North Street. Bag a loaf of his sourdough, still warm from the ovens behind the counter (£2.80), or settle down with a paper and croque Monsieur (£4.95) in the café next door.

2 Soak up the atmosphere at **St Nicholas' market** (Corn Street, stnicholasmarketbristol.co.uk) which offers everything from wheatgrass juice to handmade Pieminister pies (try the Heidi with Somerset goat's cheese, £3.50), and pulled pork sandwiches from **Grillstock Smokeshack**. At the gorgeous Source food hall & café, grab a Gloucester Old Spot sausage roll (£2.60) or stock up on local goodies.

3 The **Bristol Cider Shop** (7 Christmas Steps, bristolcidershops.co.uk) is one of the numerous independent vendors on Bristol's medieval Christmas Steps, stocking



over 100 local ciders. Try the champagne-style Pilton cider (£8.50/750ml) and Julian Temperley's Somerset Pomona (£9.95/50cl), which is great with cheese.

4 Ease yourself into the day with brunch at one of Bristol's longest-standing food institutions, the **Primrose Café** (Clifton Arcade, 1 Boyce's Avenue, primrosecafe.co.uk). Go for the All-In-Two cooked breakfast (£8.95), haddock fish cakes (£6.95), or a slab of its legendary chocolate and salted caramel cake (£2.65).



5 Transport yourself to the Med at **Papadeli** (84 Alma Road, papadeli.co.uk), a deli-cum-café-cum-cookery school whose 'papa' is affable ex-chef Simon MacDonnell. If you're staying beyond the weekend, book onto a weekday evening cooking class (£75). Otherwise, devour a chocolate brownie (£2.95) in the café or snap up a Sorelle Nurzia Italian Easter Colomba cake (£12.95*) in the deli.

6 Do a few lengths in the restored Victorian pool to sharpen your appetite then enjoy a two-course poolside lunch at Bristol's **Lido** (Oakfield Place, lidobristol.com). Chef Freddy Bird's must-eat dishes include wood-roast scallops with herb and garlic butter (£9.50) and his salted butter caramel ice cream (£5.75). Downstairs offers tapas starting at £3. Swim & Eat packages start from £30. Booking essential. →

eat away/city break

7 Tucked away in tranquil Kingsdown, the cosy **Green Man** (21 Alfred Place, dawkins-ales.co.uk) could almost be in a Somerset village. Savour a pre-dinner pint of Bristol Best (£3.50), made with British malt and hops by Westcountry brewers Dawkins (who own the pub). If you're not booked elsewhere for dinner, the home-cooked food is good too.

8 **Bell's Diner** (1-3 York Road, bellsdiner.com) in boho Montpelier used to be Bristol's fine-dining destination, but it's now relaxed into a local bistro with dishes inspired by the Mediterranean and Middle East. Enjoy the succulent, slow-cooked veal cheek with morcilla, sherry and celeriac purée (£15). The wine list is imaginative.

9 Bag a table by the window (or on the terrace) in the glass-fronted **River Station** (The Grove, riverstation.co.uk) to catch the action in the harbour. Go all out in the smart upstairs restaurant with mains such as roast hake with parmesan crust and cannellini beans (£16.50), the two-course set lunch in the relaxed downstairs café-bar is a bargain at £12.75.

10 Round off the evening with a cocktail at **Hyde & Co** (2 The Basement, Upper Byron Place, hydeandcobristol.net), Bristol's prohibition-style bar. We recommend a Stroll in the Grounds; Somerset cider brandy shaken with sloe gin and lavender sherbet, topped with Camel Valley fizz (£8).

11 Take your pick from the veg-laden cart outside another Bristol stalwart, **Reg the Veg** greengrocers (6 Boyce's Avenue, regtheveg.co.uk). Reg has moved on and it's now run by John Hagon and son Tom. Vegetables come from nearby Failand or in the case of asparagus, the Wye Valley. There's Bradley's apple juice and Ooh! Chocolata bars made in Nailsea too.

12 'Hopping' green chocolate frogs (£4.95/5) made with popping candy by James' Chocolates and sold at **Arch House Deli** (Boyce's Avenue, archhousedeli.com) make novelty Easter presents. Stock up your own fridge with West Country cheeses such as Montgomery Cheddar (£2.20/100g) or local charcutier Vincent Castellanos' pâté de campagne (£2.50/100g).



13 For a pre-dinner bite, cross Whiteladies Road to small, buzzy **Bravas** (7 Cotham Hill, bravas.co.uk), which, with its exposed brick walls and hessian coffee sacks, could be a backstreet tapas bar in Spain. Make sure you try the lamb à la plancha with hazelnut and parsley salsa (£5) or the tortilla with homemade aioli (£3).

14 Amble back into classy Clifton for tea at the newly opened **Spicer & Cole** (9 Princess Victoria Street, spicerandcole.co.uk), the antidote to faceless coffee shop chains. Ingredients are locally sourced and the sandwiches and cakes are handmade on site. The carrot cake (£2.75) is addictive.

15 Finish with a flourish by dining in central Bristol's only Michelin-starred restaurant, **Wilks** (1B Chandos Road, wilksrestaurant.co.uk). Chef James Wilkins' lobster bisque (£8) is a starter you'll want to remember forever. Or try the five course vegetable tasting menu, a steal at £29 (available Sunday only, booking essential).



More information: visitbristol.co.uk
The annual Food and Farming Awards will be held in Bristol, 9 May (bbc.co.uk), coinciding with the Bristol Food Connections festival, 1-11 May (bristolfoodconnections.com)

HOW TO DO IT

GET THERE

Trains (First Great Western or CrossCountry) run to Bristol Temple Meads, the main railway station. National Express coaches (national.express.com) arrive at the bus station in Marlborough Street; Megabus (uk.megabus.com) at Colston Street. Bristol Airport (bristolairport.co.uk) is eight miles from the centre and served by easyJet, BMI regional and Flybe.

STAY THERE

Book one of 10 stylish rooms at Number Thirty Eight, a boutique B&B (number38clifton.com) where doubles start at £110.

ON A BUDGET?

Try Brooks Guesthouse (brooksguesthousebristol.com) bang in the centre of St Nicholas' market. Doubles from £70.

£70*
PER PERSON

* Price includes two nights, half share of the cheapest double room listed above.

From top: River Station; Spicer & Cole; the Bristol Cider Shop